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Canada Council plan sets directions for the future

Montreal, October 2, 2007 – The Canada Council for the Arts, Canada's national arts funding agency, has released its new strategic plan, a statement of values and directions which will guide the Council's activities over the next three to five years.

The plan, which was approved by the Board of the Canada Council during its meeting in Montreal this week, follows more than six months of consultations with over 1,700 artists, arts organizations, other funders and members of the general public across Canada. It will form the basis of a more detailed action plan to be released by the Canada Council early in 2008. **The strategic plan is posted on the Canada Council's web site.**

The plan commits the Canada Council to five specific directions:

- Reinforcing the Council's commitment to individual artists, working alone or collaboratively, as the core of artistic practice in Canada;

- Broadening the Council's commitment to arts organizations to strengthen their capacity to underpin artistic practices in all parts of the country;

- Enhancing the Council's leadership role in promoting linguistic, regional, cultural and Aboriginal equity to ensure that its funding and operations reflect more accurately the demographic and cultural make-up of the country;

- Making partnerships with other organizations, including other funders, a key element in the Council's approach to advancing its mandate; and

- Implementing structural changes within the Canada Council to improve communication and strengthen the organization's capacity to implement change.

"This plan is really about strengthening the infrastructure that supports arts practice in Canada," said Canada Council Director Robert Sirman. "We are focusing not on physical infrastructure, but on the other elements that underpin an active and dynamic cultural life in any community, including skilled artists, strong and healthy arts organizations of all sizes, engaged audiences and a supportive public."

Mr. Sirman said the document released today is only one part of a longer planning process that will inform the Council's spending priorities for 2008-2011.

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"We are now working on how best to translate these overall directions into concrete actions, and make the most effective use of the $30 million budget increase announced by the federal government in July," he said. "We look forward to releasing the results of these discussions – including the allocation of the new money – early in the new year."

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